President's Message

By Damon Schuldt, Martinton FPD

As we have moved past the month of September, we reflect on the 25th anniversary of the tragic 911 event. It is certainly hard to believe it has been so long since that fateful day and we are now at the point that a new generation doesn't remember the day or the preceding days that followed. Many, if not all of us, remember where we were and what we were engaged in during Sept. 11th, 2001. I distinctly recall the skies being void of aircraft during the next couple days after 911 – likely something we may never witness again. I would like to quote an excerpt from the book titled "Brotherhood" by Tony Hendra. This book was written post 911 and published 1 March, 2002, to chronicle the immediate aftermath of that event and the loss suffered by the FDNY. In the introduction by Frank McCourt, Rudolph Giuliani and Thomas Von Essen, we read the following: *"everyday things in a firehouse – helmets, bunker gear, boots, a workout area, a card table, a row of beds, fire poles, - have an additional layer of meaning. They underline that a Firefighter's job is mostly waiting, always living in an edgy state of readiness for unknown perils. In times of tragedy, everyday things become mute memorials. They have an awful stillness to them as they now wait...for people who will never come."*

Next I will turn your attention to a very important and timely topic of the Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (FPIF) elections. All fire department's who have full-time employees who participate in the Article 4 pension system, or commonly called the Downstate Pension Fund, have a representative vote occurring in November. This includes municipal fire departments and fire protection districts. Within municipal departments the Mayor casts the vote and in fire protection districts the board president will vote. The FPIF does not currently have a specified board position reflective to represent fire protection districts. Our incumbent candidate needs to be re-elected in an effort to represent the Fire Protection Districts. Having a fire district trustee on the pension board is a definitive plus.

All applicable FPD President's please cast your vote for Karl Langhammer before Dec 1st. He is a former POC FF, current trustee and treasurer with the Carol Stream Fire Protection District. His financial expertise and wiliness to serve makes him a great candidate for the FPIF. See Karl's flier in this edition of the Fire Call for additional information.

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Conference was recently held in Champaign in early September and hosted by the Illinois Fire Service Institute. This great event has expanded to a day and a half experience along with a bonus day of strategic planning. Congrats to Matt Perez and the conference planning committee for their efforts. If you have the opportunity to attend any of their future events, please do so – you won't be disappointed.

Another awesome annual IAFPD Foundation golf outing was held on Aug. 21st. This year proved to be another great event with enthusiastic golfers, great prizes and beautiful weather. Many thanks to our committee, board members, auxiliary, staff, golfers, sponsors and volunteers who participated in any way, particularly Steve Schultz and Larry Brown who did an exemplary job making this event happen. Please join us next year on August 20th as we repeat this exceptional fund raising outing. All proceeds go in the Foundation toward scholarships to fire & EMS personnel, Trustees and other support activities.

We would love to have you attend any of our educational opportunities during these fall and winter months. A 12 hour Essential Trustee Training class will be held on November 6th & 7th with in-person classes at Plainfield FPD along with simultaneous satellite classes at Barrington-Countryside FPD. We will provide an in-person Continued Trustee Training (CTE) session on November 14th in Cherry Valley and an online CTE session in January. Our ever popular Winter Conference will be held at the Regency in O'Fallon, Ill. on Feb. 26 & 27. Look to our website or watch your email for registration information.

I recently attended a day at the Illinois Firefighters Conference held in Peoria October 16 - 18. This opportunity provides worthwhile training at an affordable cost while providing free lodging courtesy of the State Fire Marshal's Office. I would strongly encourage every fire department in Illinois to take advantage of this awesome event.

Lastly, I would remind everyone to remember Veterans Day on November 11th. Honor those who are currently serving, those who have served and those whom we have lost in service of our country. My father served nearly four years in service to the United States Army during WW II making Veterans Day a special one for me. Spend some time with a veteran, make their day special and thank them for their service! Have a great holiday season and stay safe! ■

Damon Schuldt, IAFPD President
Martinton Fire Protection District